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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, at its twenty-seventh session, requested the Secretary-General to submit annually to the Assembly a succinct report on those major recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit affecting the United Nations that had not been implemented, together with the reasons for each case. Subsequently, by its resolution of 19 December 1977, the Assembly decided that future reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit should provide concise information only with regard to those reports that it has indicated as being of interest to the Assembly, one of its Main Committees or its other subsidiary organs. In its resolution of 21 December 1987, the Assembly requested all bodies of the United Nations system to examine closely those reports of the Joint Inspection Unit that fall within their respective areas of competence and to comment, as appropriate, on the recommendations contained therein.

2. The General Assembly has also, in its resolution of 19 December 1989, requested the Secretary-General to standardize the format of his reports relating to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in order to include therein the recommendations of the Unit and any decisions of the Assembly and other governing bodies before making his comments. In addition, the Assembly urged the Secretary-General, in preparing his report, and the Unit, in preparing its annual report, to coordinate their efforts in order to present to the Assembly the maximum possible information on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit. The present report is submitted in accordance with the above decisions and includes detailed information on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in four reports of the Joint Inspection Unit.

II. MANAGEMENT OF INTERPRETATION SERVICES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

3. A report on this subject was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-first session (see A/41/648). It contained five recommendations addressed to various organizations of the United Nations system and focused mainly on the cost and nature of interpretation services; the supply and demand for interpreters; the balance between the use of freelance interpreters and regular staff interpreters; efforts at inter-organizational cooperation and the critical underlying issue of orderly conference calendars; and potentials for use of modern technologies. The Secretary-General's comments were provided in document A/42/95 and those of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) were contained in document A/42/672. At its forty-second session, the General Assembly, in its decision of 21 December 1987 took note of the report. In his report A/43/556, the Secretary-General gave detailed information on implementation of JIU recommendations on the management of interpretation services in the United Nations system.

A. Interpreter demand and supply

Recommendation 1: The biennial Inter-Agency Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications should include a regular agenda item to consider jointly the organizations' perceptions of current and emerging demand and supply problems and trends for interpretation and other language services.

4. The Inspectors suggested that the issues to be examined could include:

(a) Overall demand and supply problems;

(b) The geographic location and adequacy of interpreter pools world-wide;

(c) Shortages and difficulties in particular languages and language combinations;

(d) Continuing seasonal fluctuations and conflicts in demand; and

(e) The shifting and expanding demands of other interpretation customers and in related forms of interpretation work.

5. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications considered the JIU report at its interim meeting in June 1987 and decided to include questions relating to interpretation services in its agenda biennially as recommended. At its subsequent meetings in 1988 and 1989, it considered problems in interpretation services with particular reference to trends in demand and supply. In 1990, the provision of sign language interpretation and other facilities for disabled participants at meetings in the United Nations system was discussed and reported on and a recommendation thereon was submitted to the ACC. In 1991, in the context of "the elaboration of unified workload standards for conference-servicing staff within the United Nations", which had been requested by the General Assembly in its resolution of 21 December 1990 the workload standards for both freelance and staff interpreters were discussed extensively and found to be generally consistent throughout the system. No changes in the existing standards were recommended. At its 1992 session, at which the "improved coordination of conference servicing activities" was discussed, the Inter-Agency Meeting considered the systematic exchange of staff interpreters among the specialized agencies as an important vehicle for coordination that would contribute to the cost-efficient utilization of conference resources available within the system. At its September 1993 session, the Meeting examined the conditions of employment of short-term conference interpreters and their implications to user organizations under the agreement between the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) on behalf of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and the Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence (AIIC).

6. As suggested by the Inspectors, the emphasis has been upon cooperative rather than competitive actions, not only among the organizations of the United Nations system, but also between the system and the Commission of the European Communities, to deal with problems identified in arranging for the interpretation services required by intergovernmental bodies. Measures have

been taken to encourage the inter-agency loan of interpretation staff to make the most effective and efficient use of global capacity.

B. Regular staff versus freelance interpreters

Recommendation 2: The organizations with significant use of regular staff interpreters - the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and especially the United Nations for each of its four major interpretation staffs - should regularly present to the appropriate oversight committee of their governing bodies summary data analysing actual staff interpreter workloads, and consider actions to attract and utilize local freelance interpreters better.

7. The Inspectors recommended that the data include:

(a) Statistics, whether as a percentage showing interpreter days assigned to meetings relative to total days available or as actual average meetings per week. The intention would not be to increase the normal workload beyond the established seven meetings, nor to reduce the unassigned interpreter days to zero (which is impossible), but to review current levels and trends in these interpreter workload figures;

(b) A summary of types of work given to interpreters when they are not assigned to meetings. The preparation of glossaries, translation, staff loans to other organizations or sites, training work, stand-by assignments and even general preparation for meetings are appropriate alternative tasks, but only within reasons. (For instance, freelance interpreters are expected to prepare for meetings on their own time.)

(c) Information on the current situation, problems and steps taken to attract and use better an adequate supply of local freelance interpreters at headquarters locations, including in particular greater use of contract-cadre arrangements.

8. As the Secretary-General stated in his comments on the report (A/42/95), statistics on the workload of the permanent interpretation staff in New York, Geneva and Vienna are presented regularly to the General Assembly in the context of the biennial programme budget proposals.

9. Efforts to attract and use local freelance interpreters, within the terms and conditions of the global agreement between United Nations system organizations and AIIC, continue. Increasing use is being made of longer-term contractual arrangements with freelance interpreters, although the basis of such contracts now is "time actually employed", rather than a specified number of days during the year.

C. Conference calendars

Recommendation 3: Each organization should regularly provide the appropriate oversight committee with summary statistics on the proportion of late, cancelled, and unscheduled meetings - grouped by major subsidiary organs and organizational units - to identify problem areas and consider actions needed to improve the efficiency of conference resource use.

10. As the Secretary-General stated in his comments (A/42/95), the Committee on Conferences regularly receives and reviews such statistics on the utilization of conference servicing resources by 39 intergovernmental bodies meeting in New York, Geneva or Vienna. The Chairman of the Committee writes to the chairmen of bodies that have used less than 75 per cent of the resources available to them during their last three sessions, drawing attention to the need for measures to ensure that such resources are used more efficiently and encouraging them not to request services beyond their actual requirements. At its recent substantive session, the Committee decided to increase the minimum rate of utilization (the "benchmark figure") to 80 per cent.

D. United Nations conference costs

Recommendation 4: The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the General Assembly, in their current review of the financial crisis of the organization, should consider certain review, control and scheduling measures to improve conference resource use and cut costs.

11. The Inspectors recommended that to achieve more efficient use of conference resources, the annual report to the Committee on Conferences on this subject should be restructured to provide summary statistics for all major subsidiary organs and secretariat units, rather than detailed data on only a few organs, as a basis for more comprehensive and systematic consideration of problem areas and actions to improve overall conference resource use.

12. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his comments on the JIU report (A/42/95), the statistical analysis has been confined to bodies included in the calendar of conferences and meetings and meeting on a regular sessional basis; treaty bodies have been included, but not bodies established on an ad hoc basis, such as expert groups or other bodies meeting as required. At the request of the Committee on Conferences, the core sample has been expanded to include the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Board of Trade and Development of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Commission on Transnational Corporations. Since the statistics were first compiled in 1983, there have been significant improvements in the rate of utilization of conference servicing resources by several bodies. For example, the utilization factor of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, increased from 61 to 86, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean from 30 to 70, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law from 69 to 90, the Commission on Human Rights from 61 to 94, and the International Law Commission from 71 to 97.

13. The Inspectors also recommended in this regard that to help prevent the many cancelled meetings, the Committee on Conferences should plan the number of meetings for each body equal to its actual average of meetings held during the past two or three years. They further suggested that the Committee on Conferences, together with representatives of the specialized agencies, should devote renewed attention to possibilities of overcoming long-standing scheduling conflicts among the organizations' major conference activities, particularly in the June and September-November periods.

14. Since 1986, coordination among organizations of the United Nations system in planning conferences and meetings has been strengthened, but the periods of June-July and September-November remain periods of very intense conference activity. In 1989, the Organizational Committee of ACC decided to refer to the Inter-Agency Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications the question of system-wide coordination of conference activities. At its 1991 session, the Inter-Agency Meeting considered a report of the Secretary-General on a study undertaken to assess the possibility of increasing inter-agency consultation on the coordination of conferences and large meetings with a view to attaining optimum use of conference resources by decreasing overlapping, allowing for some inter-agency exchanges of conference-servicing staff and minimizing competition among United Nations agencies with regard to recruitment of freelance staff. In a further discussion of the Inter-Agency Meeting in 1992, it was generally recognized from information received from the organizations, especially with regard to statutory mandates regarding the timing of sessions, that the scheduling of conferences appeared to provide little room for manoeuvre and that, consequently, attention should focus primarily on exchanges of information regarding meeting dates and investigation of a more systematic exchange of language staff among specialized agencies.

15. The Meeting's conclusions and observations were conveyed to ACC, which took note and decided that the report should be made available to the Committee on Conferences. Having considered the report at its 1993 substantive session, the Committee on Conferences noted with appreciation the level of coordination within the United Nations system and related agencies, especially at given duty stations, as well as the agreement reached with regard to establishing a systematic exchange of information and language staff within the system to promote effective utilization of conference staff. The Committee also decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it request the Secretary-General as Chairman of ACC, through the established mechanism of the Inter-Agency Meeting, to enhance system-wide coordination of conference activities, including coordination of meetings with a view to optimizing the use of available conference services, resources and facilities, with due regard to quality, as well as enabling the effective participation of Member States, and to report on the results achieved to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session through the Committee on Conferences.

16. The Inspectors also proposed in this regard that the number of sessions of main and subsidiary bodies should be re-examined to see if they could hold only one session a year instead of two, or meet biennially instead of annually.

17. Since 1986 a number of bodies have decided to hold biennial rather than annual sessions, in accordance with recommendation 2 (b) of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the

Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution of 19 December 1986. In its resolution 1988/77, the Economic and Social Council decided to continue to consider the biennialization of the sessions of its subsidiary bodies and, with 13 exceptions, the subsidiary bodies have biennialized their meeting schedules. However, this trend has been offset recently by decisions to hold special sessions in the years in which a biennial session is not scheduled. At its 1993 substantive session, the Committee on Conferences expressed concern regarding the increased requests of intergovernmental bodies to seek exceptions to the biennialization of their sessions, particularly in view of the fact that such requests did not result in sessions of shorter duration. The Committee encouraged the Economic and Social Council to continue its consideration of the biennialization of meetings of its subsidiary bodies. Also, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/264 of 13 May 1991, the Economic and Social Council itself decided to hold only one substantive session annually, rather than two.

18. The Inspectors also recommended that more discipline should be exercised concerning the beginning and ending of meetings, with no additional resources allocated to extend them, except under very extraordinary circumstances.

19. There has been marked improvement since 1986, when the Inspectors reported that the total number of meetings with interpretation cancelled in New York during the 1984-1985 biennium (2,567) amounted to 37 per cent of the total of such meetings held (6,862). In 1992, the total number of meetings proposed for New York were 5,308 of which 844, i.e. 15.9 per cent were cancelled. However, of these 844 cancelled meetings, 409 were reassigned, and therefore utilized.

E. Other matters

Recommendation 5: The Secretary-General of the United Nations should:

(a) Reassess the latest cost factors and technical developments in the videoconferencing area to determine whether it has now become financially feasible to begin using remote conference interpretation servicing;

(b) Attempt to develop and apply, using the recent experience of other organizations, computer-assisted management processes for at least the most time- and cost-consuming interpretation management functions, which are more often performed on a laborious manual basis by senior interpretation staff;

(c) Review the low grade levels of staff interpreters in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and their differing translation/interpretation status and duties;

(d) Consider gradually increasing the number of passive languages required of Arabic, Chinese and other interpreters to increase interpretation service versatility.

20. An analysis of the latest developments in videoconferencing and of the experience of other intergovernmental bodies and an assessment of its costs and benefits will be undertaken during the 1994-1995 biennium.

21. A computer-based system for scheduling interpretation services has been established at Headquarters and used effectively since 1991; measures are now being taken to install the system at Geneva. Progress has been made in the design and installation of a computer database for the calendar of conferences and meetings world-wide, and it is anticipated that the system will become operational at Headquarters before the end of 1993 and expanded to other conference centres in 1994.

22. In regard to the item (c), the comments of the Secretary-General contained in A/42/95 continue to be relevant.

23. As indicated in document A/42/95, measures are being taken to increase the number of passive languages of interpreters through advanced training courses in specialized language institutes. Because of the considerable difficulties in recruiting Arabic and Chinese interpreters, the number of passive languages required in order to take the interpreters' examination has not been increased, but interpreters into Arabic, Chinese and other official languages as well are encouraged to acquire as many passive languages as possible. In the recruitment of both permanent and freelance interpreters, priority is given to interpreters with several passive languages. Within the limited possibilities of the Organization's overall training budget, ad hoc advanced training in languages is being provided through specialized language institutes, particularly in Arabic, Russian and Spanish, and staff members also undertake study on their own to develop their passive knowledge of languages. It should be noted, however, that this is a lengthy process that takes from 5 to 10 years, depending upon the initial level of proficiency in the language and the difficulty of the language itself. Nevertheless, it is the policy of the Office of Conference Services to encourage interpreters to acquire passive knowledge of official languages precisely for the reasons cited by the JIU report; unfortunately the possibilities for offering training or providing incentives are constrained by the limited resources available for such purposes.

III. AUTONOMOUS RESEARCH INSTITUTES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

24. A report on this subject was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-second session (see A/42/540). The report contained six recommendations. The Secretary-General's comments are contained in document A/43/397. At its forty-third session, the General Assembly, in its decision of 21 December 1988, took note of the report and the related comments of the Secretary-General. The review of implementing developments pursuant to each recommendation is broken down by specific institutes.

Recommendation No. 1 - Need for financial stability

The institutes which have not yet done so should be requested to take immediate steps to set up a reserve fund equivalent to at least 2.5 years of expenditures in order to create cushion against irregular funding patterns.

25. Whereas some institutes (for example, the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Affairs (UNIDIR) have been able to make

significant progress in setting up a reserve fund, others (such as the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) were not as successful. Two institutes (INSTRAW and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)) utilize the United Nations pledging conference as a central funding mechanism. Two regional institutes are funded partly from contributions of member Governments and partly from the United Nations regular budget (the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) and ILPES). Although one regional institute (IDEP) has experienced an increase in contributions from its member Governments, its financial situation is such that substantial support from its regular budget has had to be drawn for the past two bienniums.

26. The establishment of a reserve fund in CELADE finds a major obstacle in the fact that most of its likely contributors can provide funds only for a specific purpose, i.e. via concrete projects. Moreover they do not agree to contribute to a general purpose reserve fund. Although the Institute's administration has managed to mobilize certain funds (overheads, sale of publications) to cushion minor fluctuations, their total is clearly insufficient to cope with major disruptions in financing.

27. The idea of establishing a reserve fund has been raised on several occasions in meetings of the Governing Council of IDEP. However, not until the 35th meeting of Council on 5 May 1993 was it proposed that professional assistance should be obtained for mobilizing resources for an endowment fund for the Institute. The subject is to be pursued further at the next meeting of Council.

28. In line with this recommendation, the Member States have given their unanimous support to the regular System of Government Contributions to ILPES and have urged Governments with payment delays to regularize their contributions to ensure the stable financing of the Institute. To this end, 31 March of each year was established as the deadline for the payment of contributions. Although it has experienced a critical situation in some years, the Institute has been successful in facing it each time, mainly by means of an austerity policy and strict control of its expenditures. Every year, the Office of the Director of ILPES makes efforts to set aside reserves to cover, for a prudent length of time, contractual obligations and operational expenditures so as to extend this time length progressively.

29. INSTRAW continued to pursue the policy of strengthening its financial reserves to safeguard against shortfalls in resources. Although it has not yet attained a reserve of at least 2.5 years of expenditures, since 1987 the reserves have risen from the level of 1.09 to the level of 1.58 years of expenditure to date.

30. UNICRI has been able, despite a general reduction in voluntary contributions, to build up a reserve that amounted at the end of 1992 to almost one year's expenditure requirements. The Institute will make all efforts to maintain this level of reserve and, indeed, increase it should the financial outlook improve sufficiently to permit this.

31. To strengthen UNITAR, the General Assembly, in its resolution of 8 May 1993, decided that the UNITAR's debt to the United Nations has been

cancelled in exchange for the transfer of the UNITAR building in New York to the United Nations; the Institute's headquarters has been moved to Geneva, where most of its operations have developed. The resolution also marks the last step in the process of UNITAR restructuring. Research activities shall be limited to research on and for training, thus diminishing the operational costs of the Institute. After a short period of reducing its workload to that set out in the resolution, UNITAR will indeed have to start building a reserve fund for insuring its financial stability.

Recommendation No. 2: As a general rule autonomous research institutes should be funded through voluntary contributions. However the regional institutes should be funded through regular assessed contributions of member Governments. Except for the regional institutions, the United Nations pledging conferences should become the central funding mechanism for autonomous research institutions. UNDP funding should be limited to specific research and training projects and should be time-limited in nature. Support from the United Nations regular budget, where it exists, should be reconsidered and allowed only in exceptional cases for limited periods.

32. The Secretary-General intends to continue the formula for joint funding for the nearest future, but at the same time will work out schedule for gradually phasing out contributions from the regular budget and will present it in the second performance report on the programme budget for the 1994-1995 biennium.

33. With the withdrawal of UNDP in 1991 from funding of core posts and programmes, Member States' contributions have become a crucial source of financing IDEP. Recognizing that IDEP would not survive without such support, the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in its resolution 680 (XXV) of 19 May 1990, appealed to Member States to pay their contributions in a timely manner and to arrange for partial or full payment of accumulated arrears owed to the Institute. It was noted in the same resolution that the UNDP withdrawal and the persistent and substantial shortfall in Member States' contributions would inevitably force the closure of the Institute if no remedial action is taken. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1990/72, also reiterated this appeal. Since then, an increasing number of Member States have been paying their contributions and some are gradually settling their arrears. To reinforce this trend, IDEP has increased direct services to Member States in order to demonstrate its relevance to finding solutions to the diverse development problems confronted by African countries.

34. In regard to the termination of UNDP's funding of IDEP, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1990/72, appealed to UNDP to help the Institute survive the financial crisis it was experiencing by giving its full support to the short-term training programme and to the research and advisory activities of the Institute. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 45/248 of 21 December 1990, requested the Governing Council of UNDP to urge the Administrator of the Programme to implement fully resolution 1990/72 of the Economic and Social Council. As an interim measure of support to IDEP, the General Assembly approved, by its resolution of 21 December 1990, a non-recurrent subvention of $392,000 under section 13 of the regular budget to cover the full costs of the four key posts in IDEP. Further, by its resolution of 20 December 1991, (para. 3, sect. 23, part C), the General Assembly decided to provide a non-recurrent grant of $850,000 within the framework of the

1992-1993 biennium to cover the costs of these posts. The General Assembly, in part XII of its resolution of 23 December 1992, endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General and relevant observations of ACABQ to the effect that if the IDEP's financial situation does not improve, consideration should be given to the inclusion of four posts concerned in the ECA programme budget for 1994-1995 biennium.

35. The Regular System of Government Contributions provides an essential source of financing for ILPES. However, as part of the system of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ILPES receives continuous financial support from the United Nations regular budget. Since January 1987, UNDP funding has been restricted to specific and time-limited projects.

36. INSTRAW is funded solely by voluntary contributions from Member States. Most of its funding is received through pledges made by Member States to the Trust Fund specially set up for the Institute at the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for development activities. It has also received funding from some Governments and non-governmental organizations for specific research and training projects. Furthermore, in collaboration with ECA, INSTRAW received funds for implementing research and training components of specific projects.

37. UNICRI's activities are financed from the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund to which voluntary contributions are made by Member States, and governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as academic institutions. Contributions are pledged at the United Nations pledging conferences for development activities.

Recommendation No. 3 - Income-generating activities

Institutes that have not already done so should consider the possibility of offering income-generating activities to their users in order to strengthen their financial viability. These activities could comprise:

(a) Advisory or consultancy services on a fee basis;

(b) Studies, training courses or other tasks undertaken on behalf of United Nations agencies or multilateral and bilateral trust agencies under the auspices of the United Nations system.

38. Efforts are being made by the institutes to develop income-generating activities but so far progress has been uneven.

39. Ever since its establishment CELADE has been charging only for its publications and, in some exceptional cases, for technical assistance and eventually for training. Several reasons explain the low level of requests for technical assistance as a remunerated activity: the recipient countries were historically accustomed to receiving such assistance at no cost and the institutions to which CELADE has traditionally rendered technical assistance do not have readily available resources to defray the cost of such services. In the future, CELADE will combine free services with a gradual expansion of activities that generate income.

40. Pursuant to this recommendation and the recommendations of a more recent JIU report on IDEP, 1/ provision was made for the creation of an Advisory Services/Consultancy Division in the new IDEP structure adopted by the Institute's Governing Council at its thirty-third session in 1991. The UNDP-funded preparatory phase project includes a feasibility study on the establishment of this division pending forthcoming resources for that purpose. Also, during the last few years, advisory and consultancy services have increased including various training seminars and courses designed for specific countries and/or groups.

41. During the present biennium, ILPES has established a flexible modular system of courses of medium-term length focused on specific topics in accordance with the requirements of Member States. That has proved to be an effective and efficient new service that generated some revenues. If the income derived from this kind of activity continues to be modest, ILPES will design other income-generating activities, relying primarily on its advisory services.

42. Although INSTRAW has considered this recommendation the Institute has not yet put it into effect.

43. UNICRI continually seeks new sources of finance. The Institute launched a fund-raising campaign through the auction of antiques donated by Italian dealers in the course of 14 television broadcasts between November 1991 and February 1992. In addition, a number of future projects to be conducted in Myanmar, India and Papua New Guinea will be supported by financing from UNICEF and UNDP.

Recommendation No. 4 - UNITAR

In order to alleviate UNITAR's long standing financial difficulties and, in addition to the measures decided by the General Assembly in resolution 41/172, the Secretary-General and the Director of the Institute should reconsider pursuing the practical approach envisaged in JIU/REP/79/18, paragraph 62 (d). This approach advocates, as an exceptional measure, that the United Nations University (UNU) should cede a portion of its Endowment Fund, corresponding to the amount required to cover UNITAR expenditures for a period of three years. This amount would allow UNITAR to create a working reserve fund to cushion itself against irregular voluntary contributions.

44. Financial assistance to UNITAR from the UNU Endowment Fund appeared not to be practicable. However, closer cooperation between two institutions, in particular through an appropriate sharing of tasks and responsibilities - research for UNU and training for UNITAR - is being considered further.

Recommendation No. 5: It should be proposed to the UNDP Governing Council that Member States of the African region pay their assessed contributions to IDEP from their indicative planning figures (IPFs). If this proposal is approved and implemented, the continuity of the Institute would be assured.

45. This subject has not featured in the deliberations on IDEP in relevant policy-making bodies such as the General Assembly, its Main Committees or its subsidiary organs. By contrast, the IDEP Governing Council has reiterated the proposal on a number of occasions, most recently in the context of the Council's

consideration of the JIU report on IDEP, 2/ which recommended that payments be made by Member States through their IPFs, but that these should be used for current arrears and not for payment of future contributions. It had further recommended that such payments should start with the 1991-1996 UNDP programming cycle and that they would create a working capital fund for the Institute.

46. This more recent view is more far reaching than the above recommendation, as it holds that both current arrears and future contributions should be paid from the IPFs. At its thirty-third session in June 1991, the Governing Council reviewed the implications of this recommendation and accepted it as an opportunity for countries that wished to avail themselves of this facility to settle their arrears. The position of UNDP is that the use to which IPFs are put is primarily the decision of Governments and that it should not therefore decide how these resources are allocated.

Recommendation No. 6: Because of its continued financial difficulties and the consequent impairment of its role and its capacity to produce more and better results, UNIDIR should cease to operate as an autonomous research institute and its functions should be given to the Centre for Disarmament Affairs.

47. This recommendation was not implemented. UNIDIR continues to function as an autonomous Institute, meeting the need for independent research on disarmament and related security issues. While the Centre for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat can carry out studies only when so requested by the General Assembly, UNIDIR has freedom of expression without the constraints of having to negotiate consensus documents among government representatives. Hence, UNIDIR and the Centre discharge different functions and both institutions are mindful of the need to coordinate activities to ensure efficient use of resources in providing the international community with diversified and objective information on disarmament issues while ensuring that disarmament studies are conducted in accordance with the criteria of scientific independence. Close cooperation between the two bodies ensures complementarity and avoids duplication of effort.

48. For the implementation of its research programme, UNIDIR continues to rely largely on project-related short-term contracts. To assist in carrying out research projects, expert groups may be established to ensure that multi-disciplinary approaches are being pursued, and that various schools of thought are taken into account. Without taking a position on the views expressed by the authors of its research reports, UNIDIR assumes responsibility for determining whether a report merits publication and dissemination. UNIDIR's research programme is subject to approval by its Board of Trustees and is reviewed annually. For 1994, it includes projects on nuclear policies in north-east Asia; security assurances to non-nuclear States, high technology ground-to-space tracking; compliance with and enforcement of arms control and disarmament treaties; new dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era; examination of security concepts on the regional level; and the maintenance and development of a computerized database service.

49. UNIDIR has a small staff, consisting of a Director, Deputy Director and two general service staff. The Institute is financed by voluntary contributions from Member States and public and private organizations. According to

article VII, paragraph 2 of the Statute of UNIDIR, a subvention towards meeting the salaries of the Director and the staff of the Institute may be provided from the regular budget of the United Nations. For the last several years, the amount of this subvention has been $220,000.

III. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TECHNICAL COOPERATION

50. A report on this subject was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session (see A/45/113). The report contained three recommendations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as to the Member States and intergovernmental bodies. The related comments of ACC were provided in document A/45/113/Add.1. The General Assembly considered the report at its forty-fifth session in connection with agenda items 79, "Development and international economic cooperation", and 123, "Joint Inspection Unit". In its resolution of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly took note of the report.

Recommendation 1: Authorize the Secretary-General to establish an inter-agency "focal point" whose main responsibilities would be to monitor and to assess coordination of programme preparation and implementation by Member States and United Nations agencies in the field of human resource development, to advise Member States and the agencies concerned of progress made and difficulties encountered in the human resource development process, and to report annually to the General Assembly on results, proposals and new developments. For this purpose, request the Secretary-General to take into consideration, inter alia, the following suggestions:

(a) The focal point's responsibilities could be assigned to UNDP because of the nature of its organization (funding agency) and the prestigious infrastructure built for its efforts in human resource development notwithstanding the fact that there are other organizations in the system that could undertake this role and achieve effective results;

(b) The focal point should monitor and advise Member States and United Nations agencies on possible duplications in human resource development efforts in a given country or region, with due respect to emphasis in priority sectors targeted by the Member States through development training efforts;

(c) The focal point should ensure not only the integration of trained personnel in this development process, but the proper utilization of their expertise as an input to economic growth.

51. ACC agreed with the Inspectors on the importance of coordination among agencies in programme implementation in human resource development through technical cooperation, and supported, in principle, the need for appropriate coordination and avoidance of duplication in the programme activities of this area throughout the United Nations system. At the same time, ACC maintains the view that coordination arrangements for this purpose should be flexible and must take into account the broad scope and diversified nature of the activities of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in the field of human resource development.

52. As they did in 1990, most ACC members still hold that there is no need to establish a global "focal point", as this would lead to the creation of another bureaucratic layer within the system. Some agencies express the view that the establishment of a "focal point" could be meaningful only if adequate coordination and assessment were enforced at the national level, each Government availing itself of the contribution of all technical agencies of the United Nations system. Some ACC members consider the proposal to establish an inter-agency focal point within UNDP for coordination purposes unjustified, first, because the human resource development activities of the system go beyond UNDP-financed projects, and, second, because such a "focal point" might not be suitable to deal with training projects or activities financed directly by individual donor Governments. Moreover, they maintain that the necessary coordination is already effected and ensured through the existing inter-agency mechanisms within ACC, as well as through standing arrangements between individual agencies concerned.

53. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that since the JIU report was written, many positive steps to improve coordination in human resource development have been taken. Since 1990 for example, UNDP has published an annual Human Development Report, which has reached a global audience within and outside the United Nations system. The new Human Development Index, highlighted in the Reports, has also attracted the attention of organizations concerned with economic and social change. In its activities, UNDP is paying great attention to enhancing the human development concept at a national level through advisory missions, field-level expert teams, seminars, workshops, regional and subregional meetings and conferences on the exchange of experience. UNDP field offices and government counterparts coordinate the efforts of other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system carrying out their technical cooperation activities in the area of human resource development. Within the framework of the preparation for the World Summit for Social Development, the Secretary-General has prepared the report on the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development that includes the activities of the organizations and agencies in human resource development. The report was considered by the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in June 1993.

Recommendation 2: Human resource development activities in general and those executed by the United Nations system in particular should be oriented more towards the promotion of human fulfilment at the grass-roots level, thereby ensuring that people whose labour is needed become willing and active participants in the development process, a sine qua non for the attainment of sustainable development and the objective of self-reliance.

54. The members of ACC fully support the importance of grass-roots level mobilization. The Governing Bodies of many agencies and organizations of the United Nations system (UNDP, UNCTAD, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the regional commissions, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the World Bank and others) have kept this subject on their agendas for many years. They are concentrating their technical assistance in human resource development on full popular participation in the overall process of development and improving the quality of life in the Third World. However, while grass-roots participation is

important, certain technical training programmes can be directed only at the higher professional levels.

Recommendation 3: Invite Member States to consider human resource development and its integration into their development process as a permanent agenda item of the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Fourth International Development Strategy (resolution 43/182 of 20 December 1988). The criteria, the methodological approach and all other aspects of the problem should be openly discussed by all parties concerned at length in this forum.

55. This recommendation has been implemented. The ACC views have been conveyed to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. The promotion of the development and utilization of human resources and skills has been reflected in the text of the Strategy as one of the fundamental goals to be met during this Decade. The subject is also permanently on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Governing Council of UNDP and other intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system. As indicated above, the question of human resource development, either in the activities of the Member States or the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, will be included in the agenda for the consideration by the World Summit for Social Development, scheduled for 1995.

V. COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO EARLY WARNING OF POSSIBLE REFUGEE FLOWS

56. The report on this subject was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session (see A/45/649). The report contained five recommendations, of which two were addressed to the Secretary-General and three to ACC. The related comments of the Secretary-General are contained in document A/45/649/Add.1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its resolution 45/153 of 18 December 1990, welcomed the report. The relevant comments of ACC are contained in document A/46/134.

Recommendation No. 1: In order to introduce early warning as a regular component of work and to increase the early warning capacity of the United Nations system in refugee matters by improving its coordination, ACC should:

(a) Include in the agenda of its forthcoming session an item on early warning of possible refugee flows and further consider this subject from time to time as needed;

(b) Designate a central focal point of the United Nations system for the coordination and monitoring of factors related to possible refugee flows;

(c) Establish a working group on early warning of refugee flows, consisting of representatives of the Office for Research and the Collection of Information, UNHCR, the Centre for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as those of the former Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, UNDP, the Department of

Public Information, the World Food Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, to work out practical measures for modes of cooperation and procedures to develop an effective early warning system for refugees;

(d) Set forth a regular inter-agency consultative mechanism that should consider concrete cases of early warning of possible refugee flows and meet urgently in case of emergencies (the Office for Research and the Collection of Information and UNHCR serving as the joint convener and secretariat of such a mechanism);

(e) Make arrangements for United Nations resident coordinators to serve as coordination points for early warning of refugee flows in the field.

57. ACC, by its decision 1991/9, established an ad hoc working group on early warning of refugees and displaced persons and designated the then Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI) as the focal point for the coordination and monitoring related to possible refugee flows. Following the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat in spring of 1992, the newly created Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), instead of ORCI, was designated as the new focal point for this function.

58. The Ad Hoc Working Group met four times during 1991-1992 and concluded its deliberations in June 1992 with the unanimous adoption of its report, which recommended the establishment of a consultative mechanism.

59. On 22 October 1992, ACC endorsed the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group and authorized the holding of monthly consultations among organizations involved, beginning in January 1993. Accordingly, the first Monthly Consultation on Early Warning of New Flows of Refugees and Displaced Persons was held on 4 February 1993 in Geneva. The most recent consultation prior to finalizing this report took place on 13 September 1993. These meetings have already proven the utility of action-oriented consultation geared towards timely responses of the United Nations system to emerging situations that give rise to mass refugee flows.

Recommendation No. 2: The Secretary-General should make administrative arrangements (financial, staffing, etc.) for the Office for Research and the Collection of Information within the resources available aiming at increasing the capacity of this Office in early warning of refugee flows.

60. Since 1992, the Secretary-General has made arrangements for increasing, within the limits of available resources, the capacity of the newly created Department of Humanitarian Affairs in early warning of new flows of refugees and displaced persons.

Recommendation No. 3: Further to the ACC decisions related to recommendation No. 1, the executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system should make internal arrangements as may be appropriate with a view to strengthening early warning activities related to refugee flows, and particularly by:

(a) Assuring the rapid transmission of information to the Office for Research and the Collection of Information and to the executive heads of

specialized agencies that may assist the Secretary-General to discharge his responsibilities for early warning of possible refugee flows and may enable the organizations to address more efficiently the problems in undertaking their operational activities;

(b) Taking measures to reorganize, wherever necessary, relevant information within their respective organizations or offices and strengthen their information management methods for better contributions to early warning;

(c) Making necessary administrative and technical arrangements so as to achieve the highest possible of sharing of equipment and communication facilities within the United Nations system, in particular at the field level.

61. In connection with the new Monthly Consultations, the participating organizations have identified personnel and resources, within their own capacity, with a view to strengthening early warning activities related to new flows of refugees and displaced persons. Each participating organization has assigned a staff member to this task. These individuals have also been designated as contact persons for the early warning consultations.

Recommendation No. 4: With a view to expediting the work related to early warning of possible refugee flows, the Office for Research and the Collection of Information should:

(a) Reconsider its methodologies to develop an effective system for early warning of possible refugee flows, particularly by taking into account existing methods and techniques for monitoring within and outside the United Nations system;

(b) Give a priority to the finalization of specific indicators concerning root causes of refugee outflows;

(c) Take an initiative in promoting consultative discussions with entities that may contribute to early warning;

(d) Further develop links with existing databases within the Secretariat and the United Nations system, as well as with external sources.

62. With the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, measures have been taken to expedite the work related to early warning of possible new flows of refugees and displaced persons, as reflected in the preparation and follow-up of the Monthly Consultations, for which DHA is responsible.

63. The Department has recently obtained limited funding for a project of computerized information gathering and early warning in the humanitarian domain and expects to make considerable advances in the development of relevant indicators and of its database comprising general information regarding emergencies that call for humanitarian assistance and more specialized data about possible mass flows of refugees and displaced persons.

Recommendation No. 5:

(a) Entities involved in early warning of refugee flows should pay more attention to the research results of several institutions (e.g. UNU, UNITAR, the former Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, UNESCO, etc.) with a view to benefiting from the intellectual input of these institutions for their operational activities;

(b) Research institutions of the United Nations system should make greater efforts to disseminate information on their work related to the alert function by sending such information to the bodies involved.

64. Steps have recently been taken to further collaboration with United Nations research institutions and with academic partners in developing more sophisticated methods of early warning of new flows of refugees and displaced persons and to share with the participating entities relevant approaches and findings in this field.

Notes

1/ E/1991/8.

2/ Ibid.